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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

OCT 30 1895

VERSES

VERSES

BY

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH

PART I.

HOPEFULLY WAITING, ETC.

PART II.

MY SHIPS, ETC.

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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University Press:
John Wilson and Son, Cambridge.

TO

F. H. F. R.

The Verses contained in the First Part of this volume were collected at the request of my friend the late Mr. Charles Scribner, and published by his house in 1866. The present issue, which bears the imprint of his Sons and successors, contains, in the Second Part, the Verses written since that time.

New York, September, 1885.

Part I.

HOPEFULLY WAITING, Etc.

HOPEFULLY WAITING.

Blessed are they that are Homesick, for they shall come at last to the Father's House. — HEINRICH STILLING.

NOT as you meant, O learnèd man and good,
Do I accept thy words of hope and rest;
God, knowing all, knows what for me is best,
And gives me what I need, not what He could,
Nor always as I would!
I shall go to the Father's House and see
Him and the Elder Brother face to face, —
What day or hour I know not. Let me be
Steadfast in work, and earnest in the race,
Not as a homesick child, who all day long
Whines at its play, and seldom speaks in song.

If for a time some loved one goes away
And leaves us our appointed work to do,
Can we to him or to ourselves be true,

In mourning his departure day by day,
And so our work delay?
Nay, if we love and honor, we shall make
The absence brief by doing well our task, —
Not for ourselves, but for the dear one's sake;
And at his coming only of him ask
Approval of the work, which most was done,
Not for ourselves, but our belovèd one!

Our Father's House, I know, is broad and grand;
In it how many, many mansions are!
And far beyond the light of sun or star
Four little ones of mine through that fair land
Are walking hand in hand!
Think you I love not, or that I forget
These of my loins? Still this world is fair,
And I am singing while my eyes are wet
With weeping in this balmy summer air;
I am not homesick, and the children *here*
Have need of me, and so my way is clear!

I would be joyful as my days go by,
Counting God's mercies to me. He who bore
Life's heaviest Cross is mine for evermore;

And I, who wait His coming, shall not I
On His sure word rely?
So if sometimes the way be rough, and sleep
Be heavy for the grief He sends to me,
Or at my waking I would only weep, —
Let me be mindful that these things must be,
To work His blessèd will until He come
And take my hand and lead me safely home.

BRIDGES.

I.

— A BRIDGE within my heart,
  Known as the Bridge of Sighs,
That stretches from life's sunny part
  To where its darkness lies.

And when upon this bridge I stand
  To watch the tides below,
How spread the shadows on the land,
  How dark the waters grow!

Then, as they wind their way along
  To sorrow's bitter sea,
How mournful is the spirit-song
  That upward floats to me;

A song that breathes of blessings dead,
  Of joys no longer known,
And pleasures gone, — their distant tread
  Now to an echo grown.

And hearing thus, beleaguering fears
  Soon shut the present out;
The good but in the past appears,
  The future full of doubt.

Oh, often then will deeper grow
  The night that round me lies:
I would that life had run its flow,
  Or never found its rise!

II.

— A BRIDGE within my heart,
  Known as the Bridge of Faith;
It spans by a mysterious art
  The streams of life and death.

And when upon this bridge I stand
  To watch the tides below,
How glorious looks the sunny land,
  How clear the waters flow!

Then, as they wind their way along
  And to a distant sea,
I listen to the angel-song
  That backward floats to me;

A song of blessings never sere,
  Of love beyond compare, —
Of life so vexed and troublous here,
  So calm and perfect there.

And hearing thus, a peace divine
  Soon shuts each sorrow out,
And all is hopeful and benign
  Where all was fear and doubt.

Oh, ever then will brighter grow
  The light that round me lies :
I see from life's beclouded flow
  A crystal stream arise !

RICH, THOUGH POOR.

No rood of land in all the earth,
  No ships upon the sea,
Nor treasures rare of gold or gems,
  Do any keep for me:
As yesterday I wrought for bread,
  So must I toil to-day;
Yet some are not so rich as I,
  Nor I so poor as they.

On yonder tree the sunlight falls,
  The robin 's on the bough;
Still I can hear a merrier note
  Than he is warbling now:
He 's but an Arab of the sky,
  And never lingers long;
But this o'erruns the livelong year
  With music and with song.

Come, gather round me, merry ones,
  And here as I sit down,
With shouts of laughter on me place
  A more than regal crown.

Say, childless King, would I accept
  Your armies and domain,
Or e'en your crown, and never feel
  These little hands again?

There 's more of honor in their touch,
  And blessing unto me,
Than kingdom unto kingdom joined,
  Or navies on the sea;
So greater gifts by them are brought
  Than Sheba's Queen did bring
To him who at Jerusalem
  Was born to be a king.

Look at my crown and then at yours,
  Look in my heart and thine;
How do our jewels now compare, —
  The earthly and divine?
Hold up your diamonds to the light,
  Emerald and amethyst;
They 're nothing to these love-lit eyes,
  Those lips so often kissed!

"O noblest Roman of them all!"
  That mother good and wise,
Who pointed to her little ones,
  The jewels of her eyes:

Four sparkle in my own to-day,
  Two deck a sinless brow;
How grow my riches at the thought
  Of those in glory now!

And still no rood of all the earth,
  No ships upon the sea,
Nor treasures rare of gold or gems,
  Are safely kept for me;
Yet I am rich — myself a king!
  And here is my domain,
Which only God shall take away
  To give me back again!

TO ——.

NAY, not so, dearest! Look into my eyes,
Giving the search its clearest, amplest range;
Look in my heart, and see if there arise
In all its palpitations, new or strange,
One pulse of doubt, or smallest sign of change!
We have come hence the common road along,
And ours the common lot; for we have seen
Some lights go out, and darkness fill the way,
And even then our hearts, so full of song,
Sang to each other, as we passed between
The storm and cloud-drifts of the waiting day.
Think you such love could its dear object wrong?
I take thy answer as I give thee mine;
Yet all my gifts, how mean compared with thine!

EARTH TO EARTH.

HERE are flowers, dead and gone;
All their sweetness is withdrawn:
Look upon these faded leaves,
Whereunto no beauty cleaves;
Look upon these withered stems,
They have lost their gold and gems:
Back to thee, O Earth, I give
What for me no more doth live.

Other flowers of mine thou hast,
Upon which a death hath passed;
Sweeter flowers than these were they,
But their life has sped away,
And for them a bed was made
By the sexton's busy spade:
Back to thee, O Earth, I gave
What I could not spare or save!

Still rich flowers thou hast of mine,
And not long shall they be thine;
Sweetest sweets are soonest gone,
What is best is first withdrawn;

In the sunlight, in the shade,
Some will sicken, some shall fade;
One by one I shall receive,
Caring not how much you grieve.

This, O Earth! thy voice to me
Softly saith and mournfully,
While my heart is sore with pain,
Sitting with the dead again, —
While a mist is in my eyes,
And the night about me lies;
Now thy voice of solemn tone
Speaketh of thy realm alone.

Yet a better Voice I hear,
Falling from another sphere.
Earth, thou shalt not always keep
These of mine that with thee sleep:
What I give thee back to-day,
Keep, and welcome, keep for aye;
But the others are not thine, —
They are God's, and will be mine
When upon thy pulseless breast
I shall lay me down to rest.

LITTLE BESSIE,

AND THE WAY IN WHICH SHE FELL ASLEEP.

"Hug me closer, closer, Mother,
Put your arms around me tight;
I am cold and tired, Mother,
And I feel so strange to-night!
Something hurts me here, dear Mother,
Like a stone upon my breast:
Oh, I wonder, wonder, Mother,
Why it is I cannot rest.

"All the day, while you were working,
As I lay upon my bed,
I was trying to be patient,
And to think of what you said, —
How the kind and blessèd Jesus
Loves His lambs to watch and keep,
And I wished He 'd come and take me
In His arms, that I might sleep.

"Just before the lamp was lighted,
Just before the children came,
While the room was very quiet,
I heard some one call my name.

All at once the window opened:
In a field were lambs and sheep;
Some from out a brook were drinking,
Some were lying fast asleep.

"But I could not see the Saviour,
Though I strained my eyes to see;
And I wondered, if He saw me
Would He speak to such as me;
In a moment I was looking
On a world so bright and fair, —
It was full of little children,
And they seemed so happy there.

"They were singing, oh, how sweetly!
Sweeter songs I never heard;
They were singing sweeter, Mother,
Than our little yellow bird;
And while I my breath was holding,
One, so bright, upon me smiled,
And I knew it must be Jesus,
When He said, 'Come here, my child.

"'Come up here, my little Bessie,
Come up here and live with Me,
Where the children never suffer,
But are happier than you see.'

Then I thought of all you 'd told me
Of that bright and happy land;
I was going when you called me,
When you came and kissed my hand.

"And at first I felt so sorry
You had called me; I would go;
Oh, to sleep and never suffer; —
Mother, don't be crying so!
Hug me closer, closer, Mother,
Put your arms around me tight;
Oh, how much I love you, Mother;
And I feel so strange to-night!"

And the mother pressed her closer
To the overburdened breast;
On the heart so near to breaking
Lay the heart so near its rest:
At the solemn hour of midnight,
In the darkness calm and deep,
Lying on her mother's bosom,
Little Bessie fell asleep!

THE CANARY-BIRD.

BLITHELY thy morning song breaks on my ear
Here in the city's dust, O gentle bird;
And now the dank, o'ercrowded atmosphere,
The ceaseless noise that everywhere is heard,
Is lightened by thy music. While it springs
A wish for woods and fields where flowers be,
It drops into my heart from viewless wings
Something far better than their fragrancy.
Thou art a patient, life-long prisoner,
Shut from the world, and in thy solitude
Sighing for freedom, yet the almoner
To me of song with cheerfulness imbued;
I listen, and my restless heart grows calm,
And I with thee lift up my morning psalm.

FAR OFF, YET NEAR.

O BLESSÈD Lord!
Once more, as at the opening of the day,
I read Thy word;
And now, in all I read, I hear Thee say,
"To those who love I will be ever near;"
And yet e'en while I hear,
To me, O Lord, Thou seemest far away.

Thou Sovereign One,
Greater than mightiest kings, can it be fear
Or blinding sun
Made by Thy glory, so if Thou art here,
I cannot see Thee? Yet this word declares
That whoso loves, and bears
Thy Holy Name, shall have Thee ever near!

I bear Thy name;
That love, dear Lord, have I not long confessed?
Thy love 's the same
As when, like John, I leaned upon Thy breast,

And knew I loved; oh, which of us has changed?
Am I from Thee estranged?
O Lord, Thou changest not: I know the rest!

My doubting heart
Trembles with its own weakness, and afraid
I dwell apart
From Thee, on whom alone my hope is stayed:
I would, and yet I do not know Thy will
And perfect love; am still
Trusting myself, to be by self betrayed.

O blessèd Lord!
Far off, yet near, on me new grace bestow,
As on Thy word
I go to meet Thee: even now, I know
Thou nearer art than when my quest began;
One cry, and Thy feet ran
To meet me; Lord, I will not let Thee go!

BY FAITH AND PATIENCE.

KEEP on sowing:
God will cause the seeds to grow
Faster than your knowing;
Nothing e'er is sown in vain
If, His voice obeying,
You look upward for the rain,
And falter not in praying.

Keep on praying:
In the brightest, darkest day,
Still His voice obeying;
Never from the gates of prayer
Turn with doubting sorrow,
For the One who standeth there
May answer you to-morrow!

TO F——.

No poet e'er hath sung a song to her,
No painter from her radiant features stole
Glimpses of beauty, such as fill the soul
And captive hold the dreamy worshipper.
The gay saloon hath never been astir
At her incoming presence. She doth pass
Unnoticed through the world, save by the few, —
Such as make search for flowers amid the grass
In shaded nooks half hidden from the view.
Known only as a patient wife and true,
She rules with quiet grace her small domain;
She homage hath the queenliest never knew,
And is content each duty to pursue,
That crowns with daily blessings all her reign.

SONG.

THE flowers which blessed the early spring,
And crowned the summer hours,
Lie dead along the mountain slope,
Or in their valley bowers;
So blessings on the autumn sun,
That nursed these buds for me:
I bring them straight to thee, my love;
I give them all to thee!

The morning air was clear and warm,
The evening 's damp and chill,
And some who oft are good and kind
To-day have served me ill;
So blessings on the steadfast heart
That knows no change to me:
I find the sunlight here, my love,
I left at morn with thee.

What if these buds shall ne'er unfold,
Soon perish like the flowers;
Their fragrance evermore shall float
About this life of ours;
So blessings on the heart that turns
All things to joy for me:
The world may have its way, my love,
When I come back to thee!

SABBATH MORNING.

O DAY of love and calm delight,
"The brightest of the seven;"
O precious foretaste of the rest
And blessedness of heaven.

The birds have sung since morning broke
And yonder moon grew dim;
They never had so sweet a voice,
Or sang a sweeter hymn.

The river that at yester eve
Dashed wildly on the shore,
Moves calmly downward to the sea,
That vexes it no more.

Where'er I turn to hill or plain,
Above me or around,
A quiet fills the outer world,
Like that within me found.

O blessèd scene of peace and love,
That seems to heaven akin;
Is this a world of pain and death,
Of sorrow and of sin?

Shall singing birds forget their song,
And tempests sweep the river?
This blissful scene, my quiet heart,
Remain unchanged forever?

The coming eve may bring the wind,
The early morn the rain,
And backward send the noisy world,
To fill my heart again!

Come night of wind, or morn of rain,
Or changes sad to see;
If, Lord, Thou art my refuge still,
Why should they trouble me?

HAPPIEST DAYS.

They tell us, Love, that you and I
  Our happiest days are seeing,
While yet is shut from either's eye
  The changes of our being.
Ah! life they say 's a weary way,
  With less of joy than sorrow, —
That where the sunlight falls to-day,
  There 'll be a shade to-morrow.

If ours be love that will not bear
  The test of change and sorrow,
And only deeper channels wear
  In passing to each morrow,
Then better were it that to-day
  We fervently were praying
That all we have might pass away
  While we the words were saying.

The heart has depths of bitterness,
  As well as depths of pleasure,
And those who love, love not unless
  They both of these can measure;

There is a time — 't will surely come —
  When each must this discover,
And woe if either then be dumb
  To that which moved the lover.

There are some spots where each will fall,
  Where each will need sustaining;
And suffering is the lot of all,
  And is of God's ordaining.
Then wherefore do our hearts unite
  In bonds that none can sever,
If not to bless each changing light,
  And strengthen each endeavor?

So while these happy days we bless,
  Let us no doubt be sowing;
God's mercy never will be less,
  Though He should change the showing.
Such be our faith, as on we tread,
  Each trusting and obeying,
As two who by His hand are led,
  And hear what He is saying.

THE NEW GIFT.

Two years ago our gracious God
To us a child did give, —
A darling one now gone from us,
With Christ the Lord to live.

That gift — it opened in our hearts
A spring unknown before;
And death — it sealed the fountain up,
To open here no more.

Now when our God, whose name be praised,
Another child has given,
Whose sunny face we often think
Is like a face in heaven,

We say that she can never fill
The place so filled before;
While wondering that our loss should seem
To make us love her more!

LOSS AND GAIN.

How sadly beats the heavy autumn rain;
How mournful drives the wind among the trees;
Along the shore the weary sailor sees
The waves roll in that send him out again;
The birds are restless in the scattered leaves;
The clouds move wildly on in massy fold,
And all the outer world, or earth or air,
But yesterday so warm, so fair,
Is changed, and in a night, to drear and cold.

Now goes the golden autumn far away;
Now nearer comes the winter to my door;
And thus doth Nature, working evermore,
Create new life from changes and decay.
O Christ! who in the hall of Pilate bore
For me the scourge and mocking, for Thy sake
Fill up the daily loss in life of mine
With Thy life. So shall love divine
Out of the changing the unchanging make.

GOOD-NIGHT.

GOOD-NIGHT! a sweet voice laughing said;
And by the hope within me born,
I knew we only said Good-night
To meet again at morn.

Good-night! one time it softly said;
And by the heavy heart I bore,
I knew full well we said Good-night, —
Good-night, for evermore!

Ah, sweet it was to say Good-night
When morning could our joys restore;
What grief to part beneath the stars,
And meet on earth no more!

THE MASTER'S INVITATION.

DEAR Lord, Thy table is outspread;
What other could such feast afford?
And Thou art waiting at the head,
And I am all unworthy, Lord;
Yet do I hear Thee say,
(Was ever love so free?)
Come hither, son, to-day,
And sit and sup with Me.

O Master! I am full of doubt,
My heart with sin, with fear defiled;
Come Thou, and cast the tempter out,
And make me as a little child;
Methinks I hear Thee say,
Come thou, at once, and see
What love can take away,
And what confer on thee.

My Lord! to Thee I fain would go,
Yet tarry now, I know not why;
Speak, if to tell what well I know,
That none are half so vile as I.

What do I hear Thee say?
Look, trembling one, and see
These tokens, which to-day
Tell what I did for thee.

Nay, Lord! I could not here forget
What Thou didst for my ransom give;
The garden prayer, the bloody sweat,
All this and more, that I might live.
I hear Thee sadly say,
If this remembered be,
Why linger thus to-day?
Why doubt and question Me?

Oh, love to angels all unknown!
I turn from sin and self aside;
Thou hast the idol self o'erthrown,
I only see the Crucified;
I only hear Thee say,
A feast is spread for thee
On this and every day,
If thou but follow Me!

MARGARET BROWN.

I.

HARD by the brook, beyond the town,
  Where stands the leafless locust-tree,
There is a cottage, old and brown,
Which rearward looks upon the town,
  But faces to the sea.

The walks with grass are overgrown,
  And weeds fill up the garden-bed;
The moss clings to the stepping-stone,
And from the tree the birds have flown
  Now that the tree is dead.

'Mid all these dreary signs without,
  And scarce a sound of life within,
The passer stops and looks about,
As half in fear and half in doubt
  Of what may here have been.

Ah, 't is a simple tale and rare
Of life the stranger cannot know, —
There is a presence in the air,
As if of angels watching there,
Or passing to and fro.

Here Margaret lives, "Old Margaret Brown," —
Thus doth the clerk her name record
With what is given by the town;
Nor notes what daily is sent down
In blessings from the Lord.

Here she was born and here was wed,
Here grew her children by her side
Till one by one from her they fled, —
And there they laid her husband dead,
Brought shoreward by the tide.

Thus blessings came, thus from her went, —
God's love in sun and shadow shown —
You say a heart so torn and rent,
With all its loving forces spent,
Might harden into stone?

Ah, years did follow, all unblessed, —
How bleak was all the world, how dark!
Her wandering soul in search of rest
Only the gloom and waste possessed,
Nor found the only ark!

Oh, faithless soul that would not know
  Who ever watched or went before,
And sought in all those waves of woe,
In all their flood and overflow,
  To give thee peace once more.

II.

Oh, happy day, but all too brief,
  And night more precious still than day,
When she obtained the dear relief,
That left her still the sense of grief,
  But stole the sting away!

She sat in silence with her dead
  When Jesus came and called her name;
One answering word, and fear and dread
Went out, and unto her, instead,
  A holy quiet came.

Oh, change that did her soul astound:
  The Lord had come and talked with her,
And all her grief with comfort crowned;
She had once more the Master found,
  Beside the sepulchre.

Long years have passed — poor, blind, and
      old,
  She waits until God's will is done;

And yet her closèd eyes behold
A world of glories manifold,
  And Jesus as the sun.

What if the sea roar up the beach,
  The leafless tree the sound prolong,
Her soul its resting-place can reach,
Still tune the common words of speech
  Into a thankful song.

What if the stone no more be pressed
  By steps that woke a welcome sound;
Her loving heart is full of rest, —
With her abides a heavenly guest, —
  The Lord whom she has found.

And if the birds have spread the wing,
  The walk with grass be overgrown;
She seems to hear the downward ring
Of songs, such as the angels sing,
  Where sorrow is unknown!

O world, with all thy pomp and pride,
  So poor, so full of doubt and fear;
Lo, Christ, with gifts to thee denied,
Has every longing satisfied,
  And built His temple here!

LESS AND MORE.

Two prayers, dear Lord, in one —
Give me both less and more:
Less of the impatient world, and more of Thee;
Less of myself, and all that heretofore
Made me to slip where ready feet do run,
And held me back from where I fain would be, —
Kept me, my Lord, from Thee!

All things which most I need
Are Thine: Thou wilt bestow
Both strength and shield, and be my willing guest;
Yet my weak heart takes up a broken reed,
Thy rod and staff doth readily forego,
And I, who might be rich, am poor, distressed,
And seek but have not rest.

How long, O Lord, how long?
So have I cried of late,
As though I knew not what I well do know:
Come Thou, great master-builder, and create
Anew that which is Thine; undo my wrong,—
Breathe on this waste, and life and health bestow:
Come, Lord, let it be so!

Let it be so, and then —
What then? My soul shall wait,
And ever pray — all prayers, dear Lord, in one —
Thy will o'er mine in all this mortal state
Hold regal sway. To Thy commands, Amen!
Break from my waiting lips till work is done,
And crown and glory won!

FAIRY TALES.[1]

THE picture of a little child
Which comes to us from o'er the sea:
Why hath it thus my heart beguiled, —
Why such a charm for me?

Before it oft I stop and gaze,
And pass the rarer pictures by,
Until the shopman, in amaze,
Would seem to ask me why.

He does not know, nor need I tell,
Where, in that face, a look I see
Of one who for a while did dwell
On earth to comfort me.

The picture of a little child, —
A book, a child, and nothing more;
And she to quiet reconciled
By Fairy Tales of yore.

[1] A picture, by a foreign artist, of a little child seated and reading a large book.

What joy, what wonder on her face,
And such as children only know;
And Art has caught each changeful grace,
And will not let it go.

O childish face! thou art not mute,
Thou giv'st my thought mysterious range;
Here in thy presence I compute
A story sweet and strange, —

The story of a little life,
So brief, and yet withal so sweet;
'T would seem a dream, but for the strife
That made the life complete.

Thus many a time in days gone by,
A child who dwells with us no more,
(How deep the shadows now which lie
Where sunlight was before!)

Would sit, a book within her hand,
Her eye intent upon the page,
As though she well did understand
What did her sight engage.

O blessèd child! I see thee still!
My heart o'erleaps the solemn years,
And eyes thou once with light didst fill,
Thou fillest now with tears.

And yet through sorrow's cloud and mist
My eager sight is swift to run
Through sapphire hues, and amethyst,
And glory of the sun;

Until thy face, with wondrous change,
I, as in vision, clearly see;
O child of mine, O marvel strange!
What might I learn of thee!

Two score of years, what have they brought
Of knowledge to compare with thine?
The narrow reach of human thought,
To that which is divine!

The mysteries of our mortal state,
At which I shrink as they unfold;
Nor fear nor wonder can create
In them who God behold!

Sweet child, not mine as heretofore,
Still mine in glory yet to be;
Dear Lord, could I desire more
Concerning her of Thee?

O throbbing heart! thy longings cease;
Again, O Lord, Thy strength bestow,
And turn this sorrow into peace,
Which shall more perfect grow.

This picture of a little child,
  By one who dwells across the sea,
Thus hath it oft my heart beguiled,
  And been a joy to me !

THE COLOR-SERGEANT.

You say that in every battle
No soldier was braver than he,
As aloft in the roar and the rattle
He carried the flag of the free?
I knew, ah! I knew he 'd ne'er falter,
I could trust him, the dutiful boy;
My Robert was wilful, — but Walter,
Dear Walter, was ever a joy.

And if he was true to his mother,
Do you think he his trust would betray
And give up his place to another,
Or turn from the danger away?
He knew while afar he was straying,
He felt in the thick of the fight,
That at home his lone mother was praying
For him and the cause of the right!

Tell me, comrade, who saw him when dying,
What he said, what he did, if you can;
On the field in his agony lying,
Did he suffer and die like a man?

Do you think he once wished he had never
  Borne arms for the right and the true?
"Nay; he shouted, 'Our country forever!'
  When he died he was praying for you!"

O my darling! my youngest and fairest,
  Whom I gathered so close to my breast;
I called thee my dearest and rarest,
  And thou wert my purest and best!
I tell you, O friend! as a mother,
  Whose full heart is breaking to-day,
The infinite Father — none other —
  Can know what He 's taken away.

I thank you once more for your kindness,
  For this lock of his bright auburn hair;
Perhaps 't is the one I in blindness
  Last touched, as we parted just there!
When he asked, through his tears, should
      he linger
  From duty, I answered him nay;
And he smiled, as he placed on my finger
  This ring I am wearing to-day.

I watched him leap into the meadow,
  Where a child he with others had played;
I saw him pass slowly the shadow
  Of the trees where his father was laid;

And there, where the road meets two others,
Without turning he went on his way;
Once his face toward the foe, not his mother's
Should unman him, or cause him delay.

It may be that some day your duty
Will carry you that way again,
When the field shall be riper in beauty,
Enriched by the blood of the slain:
Would you see if the grasses are growing
On the grave of my boy? Will you see
If a flower, e'en the smallest, is blowing,
And pluck it, and send it to me?

Think not, in my grief, I 'm complaining;
I gave him, God took him, — 't is right;
And the cry of his mother remaining
Shall strengthen his comrades in fight.
Not for vengeance, to-day, in my weeping,
Goes my prayer to the Infinite throne;
God pity the foe when he 's reaping
The harvest of what he has sown!

Tell his comrades these words of his mother:
All over the wide land to-day
The Rachels, who weep with each other,
Together in agony pray.

They know, in their great tribulation,
By the blood of their children outpoured,
We shall smite down the foes of the nation
In the terrible day of the Lord.

"THE MARRIED STATE IS A STATE OF SORROW."

Dear heart, what say you, is the proverb
true,
This German proverb of the olden time?
Or did some cynic who had wed a shrew
Attempt the act to rue,
By ringing out this simple, doleful rhyme:
Live by thyself, all will be well;
Who wed shall weep to-morrow,
And find too late the married state
As state of pain and sorrow.

It is not true! — how ready to deny
This well-kept wisdom of five hundred
years;
How dare you now to make such curt
reply, —
With laughter to deny
That which to some most solemn truth
appears.

Nay, nay, you trifle! 'T is no idle jest;
This is a proverb — pray you heed it so;
And proverbs, they by some men are confessed
Of simple truths the best;
Come read it o'er again, and clear and slow.

Still doubting and denying, and with speech
That 's less conclusive than that look of thine:
Art thou by silence seeking to impeach
The cynic; by its reach
Take in our life, and say, *not true of mine!*

'T is I that trifle? Tell me how you know!
Ah, well you prove it — give me then your hand:
Do you remember now the years ago,
And when I held it so,
While God's own servant forged the endless band?

And now your face, some say, is not so fair
As on that morning of our marriage day;
And yester eve, the children in my hair
Searched out the silver there,
And laughed to think that I was growing gray.

Wellnigh a score of years have gone their round
Since we passed out to journey side by side;
And say, dear heart, have we not always found,
Where faith and love abound,
What else is needed will not be denied?

God's benediction was upon the rite,
And God's dear mercies followed with the deed;
So e'en in days of darkness, when the night
Was over-long, and light
Came slowly, *we* said not, whate'er our need,
Live by thyself, all will be well;
Who wed shall weep to-morrow,
And find too late the married state
As state of pain and sorrow.

TO F. F. R.

To-night, where gleam the stars benign
Above the broad Catalpa-tree,
O friend, I pledge thee in this wine, —
The wine thou gavest me.

More generous, sunlight and the dew
And winds that feed the autumn rain
Ne'er nursed in vineyards, old or new,
That crowd the slopes of Spain.

The peasant throng with shout and dance
This vintage gathered years ago;
Nor dreamed what guest and circumstance
Should quaff or mark its flow.

It may have been at feast, where song
And dance disturbed the fragrant air;
While noisy guests sat late and long,
To pledge the bridal pair.

Perhaps where met the proud and great,
Their studied praises to bestow
On one who well had served the state
In its convulsive throe.

At kingly boards it may have passed,
Where nobles sat with monarchs crowned;
When fulsome words the lie surpassed
In which the toast was drowned.

So too in homes, on festive days, —
Those days that household joys restore,
Perchance has graced life's common phrase
When turned to love's once more.

With pledge at feast of bridal pair,
At board of statesman, home, or king,
I place as pledge beyond compare,
That which I give and bring.

Not such as flattering lips bestow, —
The idle word betricked with art:
He honors most, as true men know,
Who honors with the heart!

And shall not I, O friend, to thee
For unrecorded deeds of thine
Give thanks, as now I hold and see
Thy gifts to me and mine?

And so, where gleam the stars benign
Above the broad Catalpa-tree,
I pledge again, but not in wine, —
He who is friend to me!

LITTLE LUCY, AND THE SONG SHE SUNG.

I.

A LITTLE child, six summers old, —
So thoughtful and so fair,
There seemed about her pleasant ways
A more than childish air, —
Was sitting on a summer eve
Beneath a spreading tree,
Intent upon an ancient book
That lay upon her knee.

She turned each page with careful hand,
And strained her sight to see,
Until the drowsy shadows slept
Upon the grassy lea;
Then closed the book, and upward looked,
And straight began to sing

A simple verse of hopeful love, —
This very childish thing:
"While here below, how sweet to know
His wondrous love and story;
And then, through grace, to see His face,
And live with Him in glory!"

II.

That little child, one dreary night
Of winter wind and storm,
Was tossing on a weary couch
Her weak and wasted form;
And in her pain, and in its pause,
But clasped her hands in prayer —
(Strange that we had no thoughts of heaven
While hers were only there) —

Until she said: "O mother dear,
How sad you seem to be!
Have you forgotten that He said
'Let children come to Me'?
Dear mother, bring the blessèd Book, —
Come, mother, let us sing."
And then again, with faltering tongue,
She sung that childish thing:
"While here below, how sweet to know
His wondrous love and story;
And then, through grace, to see His face,
And live with Him in glory!"

III.

Underneath a spreading tree
A narrow mound is seen,
Which first was covered by the snow,
Then blossomed into green;

Here first I heard that childish voice
That sings on earth no more;
In heaven it hath a richer tone,
And sweeter than before:
"For those who know His love below" —
So runs the wondrous story —
"In heaven, through grace, shall see His face,
And dwell with Him in glory!"

THE ABSENT LORD.

My Lord was taken from me: day by day
My heart grew heavier with the sins it bore,
While many dulcet voices came to say,
Why weepest thou? If He come back no more,
Give o'er thy sorrow, needless at the best.
So I their call obeyed,
And knew not, yet would know where He was laid,
And could not be at rest.

I was a wanderer thence from place to place.
I questioned some who sat within the gate,
And saw the play of the incredulous face;
On others scanned the look of scorn and hate.
My heart grew hard, — I say not how or why, —
While I my search delayed:
I cared not where my Master had been laid,
Or would His name deny.

Thus in the day I could my loss forget,
As He was crowded from me by the press;
At night, my soul, with many fears beset,
Would oft with tears its shame and loss confess,
And sick, alone, afraid,
Cry out, O world, tell where my Lord is laid,
Or let me love thee less.

One time I thought on Peter in the hall,
And soon of Mary waiting at the grave;
Then of the smiting of the threatening Saul, —
And was not Jesus near to help and save?
O light that came, and why the long delay?
I had my Lord conveyed
Afar, forgetting where He had been laid,
And gone upon my way —

My way, and He had risen to follow me, —
Me all unworthy, ne'er by Him forgot;
O wondrous love, that could so patient be!
My eyes were holden that I knew Him not!
Peace came at last, as to the twain that day
Who from Jerusalem strayed;
And while they talked of where He had been laid,
He met them by the way!

HYMN FOR THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH.

In every place, O sovereign Lord,
On ocean, plain, and mountain side,
Thy name for man Thou dost record,
Thy promise with Him to abide.

Where mortal eye hath never seen,
Where foot of man hath never trod,
Thy kingly messengers have been,
And left the impress of their God.

Here, Lord, Thy grander work begin,
Where Thy great love recorded stands;
Come now, and bless and enter in
This temple built of willing hands.

Thy love reveal, Thy truth unfold,
Make this Thy holy dwelling-place,
Wherein Thy people shall behold
The constant wonders of Thy grace.

We plead Thy promise, free and great;
Thine is the power, the glory Thine.
Come, Holy Spirit, while we wait,
And make this human work divine.

SOJOURNING, AS AT AN INN.

I LOOK abroad upon the verdant fields,
The song of birds is on the summer air;
Within, how many a treasure something yields
To bless my life and round the edge of care;
And yet the earth and air,
All that seems good and fair,
That still is mine or for a time hath been,
Now teach me I am but a pilgrim here,
Without a home, and dwelling at an inn.

Not always has the outlook been so clear:
There have been days when stormy gusts went by, —
Nights when my wearied heart was full of fear,
And God seemed farther off than star and sky;
Yet then, when grief was nigh,
My soul could sometimes cry

Out of the depths of sorrow and of sin,
That at the worst I was but pilgrim here,
With home beyond, while dwelling at an inn.

Nay, I complain not of this life of mine,
I less of shade have had than of the sun;
The gracious Father, with a hand divine,
Has crowned with mercies His unworthy one:
My cup has overrun;
And I, His will undone,
Too oft have turned a blessing into sin,
As I forgot I was but pilgrim here,
Homeless at best, and dwelling at an inn.

Look on me, Lord! Have I not need to pray
That this fair world, that gives so much to me,
Serve not to lead my steps so far astray
That at the end I stand afar from Thee?
Dear Lord, let this not be;
Nay, rather let me see
Beyond this life my happiest days begin;
And singing on my way, a pilgrim here,
Rejoice that I am dwelling at an inn.

Dear Son of God! by whom the world was made,
Yet homeless — had not where to lay Thy head,
(Not e'en by kindred was Thy body laid
In Joseph's tomb, Thou Lord of quick and dead!)
By Thy example led,
Of me may it be said,
When I shall rest and perfect life begin,
He lived as one who was a pilgrim here,
And found his home while dwelling at an inn.

OUR BABY.

I.

Of all the darling children
That e'er a household blessed,
We place our baby for compare
With the fairest and the best;
She came when last the violets
Dropped from the hand of Spring;
When on the trees the blossoms hung —
Those cups of odorous incense swung
When dainty robins sing.

How glowed the early morning
After a night of rain,
When she possessed our waiting hearts
To go not out again;
"Dear Lord," we said, with thankful speech,
"Grant we may love Thee more
For this new blessing in a cup
That was so full before!"

September, 1858.

II.

This year, before the violets
  Had heralded the Spring,
And not a leaf was on the tree,
  Nor robin here to sing,
An angel came one solemn night,
  Heaven's glory to bestow,
And take our darling from our sight:
What could we, Lord, at morning light,
  But weep, and let her go!

How dark the day that followed
  That dreary night of pain;
Those eyes now closed, and nevermore
  To open here again!
"Dear Lord," we said, with broken speech,
  "Grant we may love Thee more
For this new jewel in the crown
  Where we had *two* before!"

September, 1860.

THE WILD FLOWER.

It grew upon a sloping bank,
  Beside a common stone;
There in the starry silence drank
  The dews of heaven alone.

Uncared for, and by some unseen,
  It lived serenely there,
To grace one little spot of green,
  And bless the common air.

The idle dreamer passing by
  No gladness from it caught;
It could not fill his restless eye,
  Or waken pleasant thought.

So may I pass my humble lot,
  Content to be unknown,
If thus from me some hidden spot
  A touch of sweetness own.

SONG.

I KNOW where by life's wayside
  There is a crystal spring,
Where sometimes I sit down and sigh,
  But oftener sit and sing;
None tarry there so long as I,
  Or there so frequent be,
For it for none does outward flow
  As it flows out to me.

In the dryest days of summer
  The current sweeps along,
And winter brings no ice to freeze
  The measure of its song;
So, like a good thought of the soul,
  That wanders out to bless,
It every day but deeper grows,
  Instead of growing less!

Ask you where by life's wayside,
  On what enchanted ground,
This crystal spring, so full, so rare,
  Is ever to be found?
Look down into your heart, my love,
  As I into your eyes,
And while I trace the outward flow,
  You may behold its rise.

THE LOVING MASTER.

And the same night in which He was betrayed,
(So runs the record of that feast of Thine,)
While the Eleven joyous, yet afraid,
Scarce knew the meaning of the bread and wine,
And on the Other heavy guilt was laid,
Nor fear nor knowledge touched Thy love divine.
What if Thy coming death the hour oppressed,
No human grief should on the service wait,
Or guilt of one then sadden or abate
The grace and peace that served the loyal guest.
Dear, patient Lord, if at Thy table here
One sits unworthy, let not this withhold
Thy love from those who love; to these appear,
O Christ, as to Thy faithful ones of old!

THE HAPPY PILGRIM.

I.

A PILGRIM with his lot content,
  Nor seeking rest below,
Now to the land that lies beyond
  With steadfast heart I go.
O foolish world, I ask no more
  Thy willing guest to be;
Mine is the rich, the heavenly feast,
  And Jesus sups with me.

II.

Full often where I take my way
  Are pastures green and fair,
And living waters, cool and sweet,
  Which all the pilgrims share.
Oh, never has the day seemed long,
  The night proved drear or cold,
So that I heard His loving voice,
  Or rested in the fold!

III.

You wonder at the songs I sing,
  That so my face should shine;
Remember, friends, that I am His,
  And He forever mine:
So I a pilgrim through the world
  A princely portion share,
While He makes every burden light,
  Or doth the burden bear!

IV.

Come then, and as a pilgrim gain
  A bliss unknown before;
Though crowded is the way and straight,
  There still is room for more:
What if the way be rough to-day,
  The night prove drear or cold,
It shall not change His loving voice,
  Or shut us from the fold!

A HOUSEHOLD LAMENTATION.

Room, Mother Earth, upon thy breast for this young child of ours;
Give her a quiet resting-place among thy buds and flowers;
Oh, take her gently from our arms unto thy silent fold,
For she is calmly beautiful, and scarcely two years old,
And ever since she breathed on us hath tender nursing known:
No wonder that with aching hearts we leave her here alone.

How shall we miss the roguish glee, the ever merry voice,
That in the darkest, dreariest day would make us to rejoice!
How sweet was every morning kiss, each parting for the night,
Her lisping words, that on us fell as gently as the light!

But death came softly to the spot where she
was wont to rest,
And bade us take her from our own and lay
her on thy breast.

So, Mother, thou hast one child more, and
we a darling less;
One sunny spot in all our hearts seems now
a wilderness,
From which the warm light of the spring
has wandered swift and far,
And nothing there of radiance left but
memory's solemn star:
We gaze a moment on its light, then sadly
turn aside,
As though we now had none to love, and
all with her had died.

Ah well, we know we should rejoice that
she has gone before, —
Gone where the withering hand of death
shall never touch her more,
Up to the clime of sinless souls, a golden
harp to bear,
And join the everlasting song of singing
children there;
Yet, when we think how dear she was to us
in her brief stay,
We can but weep that one so sweet so early
passed away.

A SUNBEAM AND A SHADOW.

I.

I HEAR a shout of merriment,
A laughing boy I see;
Two little feet the carpet press,
And bring the child to me.

Two little arms are round my neck,
Two feet upon my knee;
How fall the kisses on my cheek!
How sweet they are to me!

II.

That merry shout no more I hear,
No laughing child I see;
No little arms are round my neck,
Or feet upon my knee.

No kisses drop upon my cheek, —
Those lips are sealed to me;
Dear Lord, how could I give him up
To any but to Thee?

MASTER, IS IT I?

My Master, at that board I sat to-day,
Whereon the riches of Thy love are spread, —
The blood-red wine, the white and broken bread, —
To feast Thy poor disciples by the way.
And as I sat with those in waiting there,
Methought I heard Thy voice unto me say,
As unto those who at Jerusalem were,
There is among you one who shall betray!
When first I heard, I thanked thee I was clear
Of such intent; but soon my depth of sin,
My lack of love, my weakness did appear,
To show what faithless follower I had been;
And filled with dread I cried, as now I cry,
Have pity, Master: Master, is it I?

TRUST ABSOLUTE.

PAUSE, O my soul, and here thy life review!
God honors not a service poor and mean;
Shalt thou to all the world be steadfast, true,
And in thy sorrows only on Him lean?
Thou canst not wander thus, as suits thy will,
And have thy way, and cold and selfish be, —
Denying thus His name, while claiming still
His gracious help, when so it pleases thee:
Nay, not so;
If thou thy Lord wouldst know,
No more His claims dispute;
Be thy trust absolute
If thou in grace and truth wouldst daily grow.

Tell me, O soul, as here I question thee,
If now the gains count equal to the loss?
Look on the world: Ah, has it brought to thee
From mine or mart that which outweighs the cross? —

His cross, and He thy Lord, as Lord of all,
Whose great heart o'er thee yearns, while even here
These words of sweetest pity on thee fall, —
"My perfect love can cast out every fear."
Even so;
Wouldst thou this great love know,
This wondrous gain compute?
Be thy trust absolute,
And evermore in grace and knowledge grow.

Call'st thou the service hard, — the recompense
Of the reward unworthy? Not of old
So seemed it to thee. Know ye not from whence
This change and loss? Only thyself behold!
Ye sought out other masters than thy Lord,
And would have other loves though losing Him,
Unconscious of the loss and the reward:
Ah, who can follow when the eyes are dim!
Was 't not so?
Thy Lord how couldst thou know
When thou wert blind and mute?
Be thy trust absolute
If daily thou in grace and truth wouldst grow!

Comes there not now a vision of long ago?
Thou art as Jacob wrestling at the day;
Let not the angel silent from thee go, —
Send thou the world, and not thy Lord, away!
Lovest thou Me, and more than these? Such word
He spake to Peter. Answer as did he
Out of the depths, — *Thou knowest all things, Lord —*
That with my better self I do love Thee!
Loving so,
Thou shalt not fail to know
His will; — thine own be mute:
So with trust absolute
Wilt evermore in grace and knowledge grow.

LONGINGS.

WEARY, Lord, of struggling here
With this constant doubt and fear,
Burdened by the pains I bear,
And the trials I must share, —
Help me, Lord, again to flee
To the rest that 's found in Thee.

Weakened by this wayward will
Which controls, yet cheats me still;
Seeking something undefined
With an earnest, darkened mind, —
Help me, Lord, again to flee
To the light that breaks from Thee.

Fettered by this earthly scope
In the reach and aim of hope,
Fixing thought in narrow bound
Where no living truth is found, —
Help me, Lord, again to flee
To the hope that 's fixed in Thee.

Fettered, burdened, wearied, weak,
Lord, Thy grace again I seek;
Turn, oh, turn me not away, —
Help me, Lord, to watch and pray,
That I nevermore may flee
From the rest that 's found in Thee.

"THAT PASSETH UNDERSTANDING."

O Thou eternal, Thou all-sovereign One,
By whom the worlds with all they hold were made, —
The Father's well-belovèd, and the Son,
To whom coequal honor shall be paid!
One word of Thine, and e'en the mightiest hills
Would shake and fall, the ocean cease its roar,
And all that comforts or with pleasure fills
The heart of man, be seen and felt no more!
How can I comprehend
That Thou wilt be my friend?
I know, O Lord, that I have need of Thee, —
Yet what am I that Thou art wanting me?

The stars that bless the highways of the night,
The sun, whose steady glory fills the day,
And hosts of angels, constant in their flight,
With all material things Thy will obey:

Of these not one in all their courses fail, —
They ever for Thy service on Thee wait;
While all combinèd powers could not prevail
To shake that kingdom which alone is great:
Lord, can I comprehend
That Thou shouldst be my friend?
I know, O Lord, that I have need of Thee, —
Yet what am I that Thou art wanting me?

I am as but the balance dust, — a mote
That floats upon the early morning air,
Which e'en a mortal king would fail to note,
Or brush aside without a thought or care, —
A passing ripple on the sandy shore,
That rolls and breaks, but has no power to stay, —
Or, at my best, one who might be no more,
With few to miss him in the common way:
How can I comprehend
That Thou wilt be my friend?
I know, O Lord, that I have need of Thee, —
Yet what am I that Thou art wanting me?

O Lord, I thank Thee that Thou hast revealed
Such love, and honor put on one so mean;

Thy grace the hidden mystery hath unsealed,
I, all unworthy, have Thy glory seen!
And still the wonder grows no less that I
May call Thee Master, and Thy great name bear; —
That Thou, O Lord, for such as me shouldst die,
And ever have me in Thy loving care,
I cannot comprehend,
Yet know Thou art my friend, —
Know that I evermore have need of Thee, —
Yet what am I that Thou art wanting me?

Part II.

MY SHIPS, Etc.

MY SHIPS.

I.

Ah, years ago, — no matter where,
Beneath what roof or sky, —
I dreamed of days, perhaps remote,
When ships of mine that were afloat
Should in the harbor lie,
And all the costly freights they bore
Enrich me both in mind and store.

What dreams they were of argosies,
Laden in many a clime:
So stoutly built, so bravely manned,
No fear but they would come to land
At their appointed time;
And I should see them, one by one,
Close furl their sails in summer's sun.

And then, while men in wonder stood,
My ships I would unlade;
My treasures vast they should behold,
And to my learning or my gold
What honors would be paid!
And though the years might come and go,
I could but wiser, richer grow.

II.

In later years, — no matter where,
Beneath what roof or sky, —
I saw the dreams of days remote
Fade out, and ships that were afloat,
As drifting wrecks, go by;
And all the many freights they bore
Lay fathoms deep, or strewed the shore!

While ships of which I never thought
Were sailing o'er the sea;
And one by one, with costlier lade,
In safety all the voyage made,
And brought their freights to me:
What I had lost but trifle seemed,
And I was richer than I dreamed!

No wondering crowd, with envious eye,
Looked on my treasures rare;
Yet they were weightier far than gold:
They still increase, though I grow old,
And are beyond compare:
Would all the restless hearts I see,
Had ships like these that came to me!

THE SUMMER DROUGHT.

Day after day the fiery sun sends down
Unmoistened heat on mountain and on plain,
And shallow brooks, and meadows crisp and brown
Lift up the cry for rain.

Night after night the myriad stars move on
Undimmed by cloud, along their trackless way;
While all the dews are from the heavens withdrawn,
And e'en the flowers decay.

"God send us rain!" breaks from impatient lips;
Yet night or morn no promise brings or change,
For still the burning sun has no eclipse
In all his daily range.

Oh, weary nights! oh, long and toilsome days,
When God holds back His moisture from the land,
And woods and fields, and all life's trodden ways
Are dry as desert sand.

Oh, days and nights more drear and toilsome still,
In which the parchèd soul sits dumb with pain,
Nor asks that God would gracious be, and fill
Its empty springs again.

Lord, send Thy quickening rain, and hill and field
And stream, to life as from the dead restore;
So that the autumn harvests to us yield
Their blessings as before.

Break up, O Lord, this more than summer drought
Wherein our thirsty souls so long have lain;
Bend low Thy heavens, and on us, Lord, pour out
Thy blessed latter rain!

THE FRIEND WHO WAITS.

Do you recall that saintly monk of old
Thomas à Kempis, who with wondrous pen
Out of his heart the love of Jesus told
For him as for all men?—
That we by grace escaping from our thrall
Might out of weakness rise to imitate
The Kingliest of our race, from low estate
Reach heights that angels know not? All in all
Was Christ unto his soul; therein is found
His quick of greatness! Loved we the world less,
How in such gifts as his might we abound,
And more of our love confess!

Of him 't is said that from his daily task
With other monks he oft would break away,
Saying, "Good friends, I go, nor will you ask
Why I would not delay;
That Friend is waiting for me in my cell

Whose presence there on earth a heaven
will make."
Ah! well they knew it was of Christ he
spake, —
That Elder Brother, whom he loved so well.
Who shall declare what glories then he saw,
Communing with his Lord, as face to face,
When Love shut out the terrors of the law,
And added grace to grace!

Would that we might so use our privileged
powers, —
Thus in the restless searches of the day
Make luminous some fragments of the hours
With prayer and praise! Alway
Our Lord is waiting for us where we will;
And yet we keep Him waiting, while we
gain
That which may bring us only loss or pain,
And our dull souls with restless longings
fill:
What if at such delay He weary grow,
Or touched by cold indifference should de-
part?
Go not, dear Lord! nay, Lord, that grace
bestow
Which evermore shall keep us where Thou
art!

A VISION OF REST.

THE full round moon, the cloudless sky
Where now the early frost distils;
The tranquil river rolling by,
And outline clear of sombre hills.

The trees their spectral branches lift
O'er meadows brown and gardens bare,
While on the ground the shadows drift,
Or float upon the dreamy air.

The day, with vexing care opprest,
Gives place to night and thoughts serene;
And brings, with consciousness of rest,
A sense of glory yet unseen.

Oh, holy trust! oh, peace profound!
Here, in the silence of the night,
I pass as one o'er hallowed ground
To some unknown, some Pisgah height,

From whence the distant stars are near,
  These cool gray hills seem far away,
While in the changing lights appear
  The heralds of the coming day:

Not day that gives to me once more
  The common round of toil and care, —
The burdens I at morning bore,
  And each to-morrow still must bear;

The contact with life's meaner things
  That soil and would my soul possess;
Or dim forgetfulness that brings
  Not rest, but sense of weariness.

O holier life, O clearer day,
  That now my heart with rapture fills,
When will these shadows drift away,
  When burst thy light beyond the hills?

Yon moon, in light effulgent, fade?
  These glittering stars obscure their fires?
Come, O that hour, too long delayed,
  And bring me what my soul desires.

Peace, thankless soul! dost thou behold
  God's glory to forget His will?
Shall He such beauty here unfold
  To make thee more impatient still?

The visions of a night like this
  The purpose of the day unnerve,
And dreamy thoughts of future bliss
  Unfit thee now to wait and serve?

Fade out, ye stars! descend, O moon,
  Where spreads the clear horizon's rim!
Come, day of toil, and bring the boon
  They have who watch and wait for Him!

CHRIST THE THEME OF SONG IN ALL AGES.

Oh, endless theme of never-ceasing song
And music, wakened by supremest love!
How hath it broke from feeble lips and strong,
The power divine, and matchless grace to prove:
Christ Son of God, and Christ the Son of Man,
Christ on the cross, and Christ in kingly reign.
So through the ages, since the song began,
With swelling hosts, the saints repeat the strain.

On hills and plains the Israelite only knew,
On classic soil, on drifting desert sand,
Where'er the Roman eagles swiftly flew,
Or roamed abroad the fierce, ungoverned band;

'Mong Jew and Gentile, as in wandering horde,
Barbarian, Scythian, all, the bond or free, —
There were who watched and waited for the Lord,
And some who did His mighty wonders see.

How from the warm and ever-ruddy East,
Far to the rugged North and golden West,
The knowledge of this wondrous Christ increased,
With life and hope the dying nations blessed:
Thence saints, exultant, onward bore His sign
From land to land, and compassed every shore;
One Lord, one faith, one aim, one end divine,
Their theme and song, their life forevermore!

Since holy women bowed their heads and wept,
Where from the grave the angel rolled the stone, —

That grave where He, the Son of God, had slept
As Son of Man, in darkness and alone, —
What countless names the world's applause have won!
What notes of praise have men to these inscribed!
How soon to be forgotten, one by one,
And earth's poor honors to the dead denied!

Not mightiest kings the earth has ever seen,
Nor time, nor powers men honored or abhorred,
Could crush the memory of the Nazarene,
Or shut the saints from presence of their Lord:
In kingly courts, in prisons foul and damp,
In scenes tumultuous, as in homes of peace,
There, with His own, God's Angel would encamp,
There rise the songs that nevermore shall cease!

Thus through the years of ages long ago,
Thus in the changes of these latter days:
One only Lord, our Lord, above, below,
And He the object of our endless praise:

This the same key-note of unnumbered lyres;
  This, too, the unending song of sweet accord.
O world! ye have no theme that thus inspires;
  Ye still reject and crucify the Lord.

In furnace-fires, on mountains drear and cold,
  In peasant hut as in the palace hall,
The story of His life forever told,
  And His dear love the burning theme of all:
From lips too weak aught human to express,
  From noble hearts that held the world at bay,
What songs have risen, and what strains confess
  The blessed One whom I would praise to-day!

Christ Son of God, and Christ the Son of Man;
  Christ on the cross, and Christ in kingly reign!
So sang the saints when first the song began;
  So shall it rise, a never-ending strain.

Come Thou, and touch my lips, that I may sing;
Come fill my heart with love to overflow:
My Lord, my Life, I would some tribute bring,
And tell the world how much to Thee I owe!

WITHIN AND WITHOUT.

Sometimes into my soul
I sadly look,
And try to read it, as I oft have read
A strange, mysterious book,

Wherein the thought beyond
My laboring brain
Has vexed me in a long and vain attempt
Its meanings to obtain.

How can I comprehend
This soul of mine, —
The true, the false, the clear, the complicate,
The human, the divine?

What mazes do I find!
Where do they tend?
Of all I read what do I understand,
Or fail to apprehend?

Alas, I cannot tell!
Sometimes I see
The deepest, holiest truth flash full and clear, —
Then all is dark to me.

So when into my soul
I sadly look,
I am as one who dreams or vaguely reads
A strange, mysterious book:

He fails to comprehend
Except in part,
And often turns unsatisfied away
With aching brain and heart,

Unless there come to him
Some teacher wise,
Who will unfold the subtile, hidden thought
That deep within it lies.

So come, O Christ, to me:
Nay, I will go
Out of myself to Thee, and Thou, O Lord,
Wilt teach what I would know.

AN AUTUMN BURIAL.

A SWEET, sad day in autumn time,
When cloud and sun, and earth and air,
Blend as a dream of some pure clime,
Mysterious and fair.

The grass its earlier green has lost,
The summer flowers their blooms have shed;
And beautiful with touch of frost,
The maple lifts its head.

Through clouds that would his path impede,
The sun serenely seeks the west;
While they in rosy flecks recede,
Or seem to lie at rest.

The singing birds are far away,
The summer hours too soon have sped,
And left to me this autumn day,
The dying and the dead!

Oh, quickened sense of time and change,
Of outward calm and inward strife;
Bewildering thoughts that heavenward range,
Then mix with human life.

The cool sweet air, the sky serene,
The clouds adorned with gems and gold;
And yet what shadows lie between,
What hearts do they enfold!

Here close beside the spreading tree,
Ere winter's cold its beauty sears,
We make a resting-place for thee,
O friend of many years!

So human hearts bereaved must ache
When our beloved lie down in peace:
God wills that we new burdens take,
That they have full release.

Thy sovereign will, O God, be done, —
Thy love supreme knows what is best;
Shall I have strength the race to run,
Shall I attain the rest? —

That rest beyond all thought or speech, —
Thy gift, to none who seek denied;
The perfect rest we only reach
Through Him who loved and died:

With peace, whose depths we cannot know,
  Howe'er we seek, how much we crave,
Till Thy great hand shall open throw
  The gateways of the grave!

Dear Son of God, who came to weep
  Where one of Thy beloved was laid
(He at Thy voice awoke from sleep,
  Thy call to life obeyed),

I ask not for my dead again,
  Only Thy help: come, Lord, and show
How through this loss and sense of pain
  I more of Thee may know!

Sleep on, O friend, supremely blessed,
  While fades afar this autumn day;
While fills with golden light the west,
  An unbeclouded way!

Oh, life beyond, — oh, sinless land,
  Where falls no changing, darkling air!
I in the shadows waiting stand,
  And thou hast entered there!

A SUNDAY THOUGHT.

THE sunlight floods the hills,
The water ripples in the quiet bays;
While through the wood the gentle south wind plays,
And every stately pine with music fills.

I hear the twittering birds,
The chirping squirrel running to and fro;
And in the pastures which so well they know,
Contented browse the patient, lowing herds.

No hum of human life, —
How peaceful yonder hamlet, and how still!
The moving air wakes no discordant thrill,
No echoing sound of labor or of strife.

The tumult of the earth
Seems hushed to peace; and thus, scarce knowing why,
The restless heart grows calm, as round it lie
The hidden forces of celestial birth.

Is it the rest of peace?
Can hush of sound, or air, or sky serene,
These quiet woods, with sunny paths between,
Hold fast the soul, or bid its tumults cease?

Only a few brief days,
And the north wind will come, and as a blast;
The frost pierce deep and keen, the broad woods cast
Their leafless shadows over dreary ways.

Even the morning's sun
Will bring the struggle and the strife once more;
And in the old round, as in the days before,
I must take up my burdens one by one.

Oh, promise, firm and sure, —
"Not as the world giveth, give I unto thee:"
Such, O my Lord, Thy promise is to me
Of peace, — that peace which ever shall endure!

Nor time, nor change, nor place
Shall wrest or break this word; to it I hold
Alike in storm or calm, in heat or cold,
Encompassed by Thy ministry of grace.

FOR MY SAKE.

A THOUGHT FROM RUDOLPH STIER.

Not for Thy sake, but mine, O Lord of glory,
Thou didst lay Thy regal raiment by;
Not for Thy sake, but mine, — oh, wondrous story! —
Came to suffer, and for me to die!

Lo! the King, with love supreme and endless,
Did the office of a servant bear;
Crowned with thorns, and buffeted, and friendless,
That I might be made a kingly heir!

Turn, O man, the world's historic pages;
Scan each noble, each heroic deed:
Can ye find in all recording ages
Such a love, to meet so sore a need?

Not in old or new or mystic story
Is there that ye may with this compare;
King of kings! who put aside His glory,
That I might a crown of glory wear!

For my sake, O Lord, this abnegation,
When Thine angels stood from Thee apart;
For my sake, the death and desolation! —
Peace, my wondering and perplexèd heart —

Here so much as this to thee unfolding, —
More than this the human could not bear;
And the rest when thou, His face beholding,
Shalt the fulness of His glory share!

I. N. B.

She waited for the coming of her Lord,
As one who knew that He was near at hand;
She had gone down into the Border Land,
And stood beside the river at the ford,
Ready to cross as He should give command.
With her He stood, encompassed round about
By unseen angels; when a sudden light
Fell on her face, as though there then went out
The final touch of Nature, while her sight,
As that of Stephen, rapturous with delight,
Beheld her Lord! And when she called His name,
Her hand outstretched with voice so clear, so sweet,
We could but praise Him, as to her He came,
And took her hence, and made her joy complete.

ABIDING WITH GOD.

Let every one, whate'er his calling be,
Therein abide with God. So wrote of old
Saint Paul to them at Corinth, and to me
With loving lips to-night that truth was told.
I had grown weary with my strifes and cares,
And murmured at the service of the day,
Wherein I had forgotten, unawares,
That thus I still might honor and obey.

Abide with God! Would I might ne'er forget,
That evermore I may with Him abide!
What matters how or when the stamp is set,
Or what the furnace where the gold is tried,
So that the metal has the sterling ring,
So that the likeness of the King is shown, —
God's coinage still, that to the soul will bring
Such wealth as merchant princes have not known.

In market-places where the race is swift,
And competition on temptation waits;

In quiet homes where unseen currents drift
A thousand petty cares through open gates, —
Let each and all, whate'er the calling be,
Therein abide with God; from break of day
Till set of sun they shall His purpose see,
And serve Him in His own appointed way.

So let me see and serve, and thus abide:
Not simply patient, or at best content;
Not with eye-service, wherein, love denied,
In rounds of duty solemn days are spent.
Give me, O Lord, a joy that is divine,
Touch Thou my lips with constant themes of praise;
Since, having Thee, all things I need are mine,
Whate'er my lot, whate'er my length of days.

A CAMP-FIRE STORY.

I.

FOOTSORE and weary with our long day's tramp
Upon the mountain top we stood at last;
"Here for a while," we said, "we will encamp,
Here rest and break our fast."

From early noon almost till set of sun,
O'er rushing streams, through woods and thickets dense,
Our upward way had wearily been won,
And, lo! the recompense!

From north to south, as from the east to west,
Peak upon peak the circling mountains rose;
Some with the purple lying on their breast,
Some crowned with lingering snows;

Some in the shadows of the closing day, —
Those noiseless heralds of the night at hand, —
Stood out as giants clad in black and gray,
The warders of the land.

Above, the clouds in many a fleck and fold
Of tint and color floated calmly on;
Below, the lake its gleaming waters rolled,
The mid-day glories gone.

We laughed and talked, outstretched upon the ground,
Till with the deepening twilight silence came, —
Till each within a kindred feeling found,
Alike, yet not the same.

And on each face, as in the dreamy eye,
There was that far-off look we sometimes see
In children's faces, when they meet or try
To solve a mystery.

And so we mused until the full night came,
And then, where rose the camp-fire's lurid gleams,
Each came, when called by his familiar name,
Out of his world of dreams.

And far into the night so lone and weird,
We chatted on and needed sleep delayed,
Till one slow uttered, "God is here ensphered
In temples by Him made.

"No temple reared by slow consummate skill,
No service uttered oft by human speech,
With awe like this my earnest soul could fill,
My higher nature reach.

"Look where the countless stars their sweep maintain
Above the mountains which impassive stand:
Lo! law and order in perpetual reign,
The gospel of God's hand!

"I know not how or why or whence they rose;
I am content with what I see and feel,
Nor care if they a first great cause disclose
Or final end reveal.

"I worship best where Nature has her shrine;
And here to-night I am as one at rest,
Nor ask that any change his faith for mine,
Though mine I know is best."

Then came a pause: above the silenced camp
The restless fire shot high its fitful flame,
While o'er the dreary mountains, thick and damp,
A chilling night-wind came.

II.

Soon, one by one, the tired campers slept,
While Pierre, the guide, and I sat there alone
And silent mused, as dreamy watch we kept,
O'er light on darkness thrown.

A plain unlettered man, he little knew
Of books and all the wisdom they dispense;
Still, by his fellows, rated honest, true,
And full of common sense.

Last year, so in the village we were told,
He wifeless, childless, in a week became;
How safe, I thought, those brawny arms might hold
Whatever bore his name.

It was no fancy, watching then and there,
That I could read upon his sunburnt face
Something still deeper than those lines of care
That time and sorrow trace:

Touches of grace the eye can ill define,
That tell of suffering and yet speak of rest;
The subtile symbols of a work divine
In looks, not words, expressed.

I scarce knew why; yet as he stood and plied
The waning fire till far its light arose,
I thought of martyrs who in flames had died,
And straight again of those

Who year on year without the martyr's fame
In living, not in dying, do God's will:
A burning bush with mystic fire aflame,
Consumed, yet burning still.

Pierre broke our silence, speaking calm and slow,
As one who feared to speak what well he knew:
"How little we of God and heaven would know
If what Hall said were true!

"Here in these mountains I was born, and here
Have always lived, — here too I hope to die:
I in them all have hunted bird and deer,
And heard the wild beast's cry.

"I have been where the silence was so deep
That it was awful; ached e'en for a sound
Of bird or beast or wind, and could not sleep,
So dead was all around.

"Was I afraid then? what had I to fear?
I knew my way out, as I knew it there:
Did I then think of God? yes; not as near,
Only as everywhere.

"One time, two years ago, along this range,
As night came on, somehow I lost my way;
Well, I did have a feeling new and strange,
And *then* I tried to pray:

"I tried and could not, still I knew not why;
I wanted help and yet it did not come;
I thought I must get hold of God or die,
And yet my lips were dumb.

"These mountain peaks, they did not fetch
Him near;
When the stars came they brought no
help to me:
Somehow they filled me more and more with
fear
And dread of what might be.

"And how did I escape? When daylight
broke,
After long search I hit upon my way:
Once I was safe, no word of thanks I
spoke;
What need had I to pray?

"What changed me then?" He told with
accents low —
With plaintive voice, and tremulous tender
tone,
Revealing thus the depth and passionate
flow
Of sorrows he had known —

A simple tale of absence long delayed
In hunts on ranges by him seldom trod;
Of his return, to stand aghast, afraid,
As face to face with God.

Dead! and he had not dreamed that they
were ill;
Buried! e'en while he sought their warm
embrace:
Not here! but lying yonder, cold and still,
His home a desolate place!

His heart was stone, and hardened evermore
Under the pressure of rebellious thought,
While he alone the heavy burden bore,
Alone his battle fought!

Thus hopeless, helpless, and by grief con-
trolled,
And compassed by the spirit of despair,
Back on his heart, dazed and perplexed, he
rolled
The load he would not bear.

So months went on, but brought no glad re-
lief;
Nor sun, nor star, nor plain, nor mountain
height
Could lift from off his heart the sense of
grief,
Or change the dark to light!

One day — he knew not how, he now knew why —
There came a sudden light like that to Saul;
Out of himself he went, and God came nigh
And answered to his call.

He told the story of his grief, his sin;
He prayed alike for pardon and for grace;
Opened his heart, and Christ then entered in,
To fill each vacant place!

Though scars remained, the deep, deep wounds were healed;
With rest, with peace, his days, his nights were crowned,
Since God, not Nature, had to him revealed
The Christ whom he had found!

Such was the tale: our campers rested still,
While now the fire burnt on with steady flame,
And o'er the summit of a distant hill
The flush of morning came.

UNTO THE DESIRED HAVEN.

PSALM CVII.

WHAT matter how the winds may blow,
Or blow they east, or blow they west?
What reck I how the tides may flow,
Since ebb or flood alike is best?
No summer calm, no winter gale,
Impedes or drives me from my way;
I steadfast toward the haven sail
That lies, perhaps, not far away.

I mind the weary days of old,
When motionless I seemed to lie;
The nights when fierce the billows rolled,
And changed my course, I knew not why.
I feared the calm, I feared the gale,
Foreboding danger and delay,
Forgetting I was thus to sail
To reach what seemed so far away.

I measure not the loss and fret
Which through those years of doubt I bore;
I keep the memory fresh, and yet
Would hold God's patient mercy more.

What wrecks have passed me in the gale,
  What ships gone down on summer-day;
While I, with furled or spreading sail,
  Stood for the haven far away.

What matter how the winds may blow,
  Since fair or foul alike is best;
God holds them in His hand, I know,
  And I may leave to Him the rest,
Assured that neither calm nor gale
  Can bring me danger or delay,
As still I toward the haven sail
  That lies, I know, not far away.

THE SILENT HELPER.

All through the dreary time they came and went, —
Those friends who talked in mournful tones and low, —
And still they brought nor peace, nor banishment
To grief whose depths 't was mine alone to know:
They could not enter where I had to go;
And while they came with willing feet,
And all their many words were sweet,
They failed to bring what they would fain bestow.

Oh, smitten heart that wandered here and there!
Oh, aching brain that would, but could not rest!
Dear loving friends, ye sought in vain to bear
The heavy sorrow that my soul possessed,

And so the limit of your love confessed:
I heard, — your words seemed not in vain;
Ye went, — and backward came the pain,
With sense of loss to quicken and molest!

So did ye sadly come, and day by day
With yearning faces look upon my dead;
Thus stand beside me while I laid away
The dear, dear dust within the narrow bed:
I heard with tearful eyes what then ye said;
Your looks of love I see them still; —
Ye could not find the way, or fill
The place my Lord was seeking in your stead!

Ah me, how slow of heart, how poor and dumb!
Where would I go that I might rest obtain?
Why was the noisy world so swift to come
And plead to hold my bruisèd heart again?
My Lord came not. Could I have called in vain,
Or from me had He turned aside?
While knowing one of mine had died,
Was He indifferent to my loss and pain?

I was as one besiegèd night and day
By the incessant hosts of doubt and fear;
They pressed my soul, e'en when I knelt to pray,
And drove my Lord away as He came near:
I called, but not with voice that He could hear;
I sought Him where I might not find;
Then, weak as one who had grown blind,
Said, "He comes not; oh, when will He appear?"

Oh, silent mystery of the grace divine
That on my sore impatience thus did wait;
That bore with meekness this unrest of mine,
And suffered not the mercy to abate!
Dear Lord, Thou wouldst not leave me desolate,
And so with pitying tenderness
Remained till Thou couldst fully bless,
And Thy divinest purpose consummate.

Oh, changeful hour, and unforgotten way
In which I woke as from a dreamy sleep!

No voice I heard, and yet without delay
I went as Peter, walking on the deep;
I saw Thee then, and cried, "O Master, keep
This heart of mine! Come Thou and fill
This void of Death!" He wrought His will;
And peace came to me, though I still might weep.

OUTWARD BOUND.

I SIT and watch the ships go out
  Across the widening sea;
How one by one, in shimmering sun,
  They sail away from me!
I know not to what lands they sail,
  Nor what the freights they bear;
I only know they outward go,
  While all the winds are fair.

Beyond the low horizon line
  Where my short sight must fail,
Some other eyes a watch will keep,
  Where'er the ships may sail;
By night, by day, or near or far,
  O'er narrow seas or wide,
These follow still, at love's sweet will,
  Whatever may betide.

So round the world the ships will sail,
  To dreary lands or fair;
So with them go, for weal or woe,
  Some dear ones everywhere:

How will these speed each lagging keel
When Homeward it is laid;
Or watch will keep, o'er surges deep,
If there a grave be made!

O human love, so tried, so true,
That knows no mete nor bound,
But follows with unwearied watch
Our daily changing round!
O Love divine, O Love supreme,
What matters where I sail,
So I but know, where'er I go,
Thy watch will never fail!

THOMAS HARVEY SKINNER.

Not now, as oft, do I his face behold, —
The man of gentle will and courtly mien,
The thoughtful student, earnest yet serene,
Or preacher, by whose lips God's truth was told,
And in such way with him our eyes have seen
Days like to that of Pentecost of old!
I see him rather as a little child
Aglow with love, and crowned with simplest grace,
With faith that fear and doubt had not defiled,
And to his loving Lord so reconciled,
He dwelt within the smiling of His face.
I think in midst of us Christ gave him place,
To teach, as once before, that such as he
They must become who would His kingdom see!

THE REST OF FAITH.

Why vex my heart on what I need not know,
Or search for that I may not hope to find,
While restless thoughts still urge me to and fro,
With dull, uneasy mind?
Shall I pursue some dangerous, hidden way,
Or strive to pierce a darkness vast and deep,
Till doubts and fears assail me, or delay,
And shut me from the calm, effulgent day,
While I but dream or sleep?

Ah, mysteries compass all my outer life,
While hidden deep are greater mysteries still, —
The good and evil in unending strife,
With an inconstant will:
Myself not e'en myself can comprehend;
In vain I drop the plummet in this sea:
Shall I deny my Lord, reject my Friend,
Since all His ways are not revealed to me,
Or I know not their end?

E'er since began my life its common round,
As day succeeded night, or night the day,
My toil or rest have I not ever found
In God's appointed way?
I am no waif tossed on a rushing stream
By changing winds: predestined ends are mine,
With knowledge of a love complete, serene,
And watch and guidance of a power divine,
Eternal, and supreme!

O gracious Lord, who from the wise dost hide
That which to little ones Thou wilt make known,
Keep Thou my heart untouched by human pride,
Make Thou Thy will my own:
Even as a child leans on its mother's breast
In sweet, confiding love, contented there,
So let me lean, so be my faith expressed,
Unvexed with doubt and undisturbed by care,
And leave to Thee the rest.

A WINTER THOUGHT.

Out from the north a driving wind and keen,
Out of the leaden clouds the drifting snow;
Yet not far off are skies which are serene,
And balmy winds that soon will hither blow.

Naked and weird against the wintry sky
The stately trees moan in the frosty air;
While deep within, enfolded safe, there lie
The buds and blossoms they erelong shall wear.

Fast locked in ice the babbling brooks are bound,
And flowing rivers motionless are seen;
Yet far below the noiseless springs abound
Which soon will change the sere into the green.

Under the snow, in meadow and on wold,
Dead lie the grasses, dead the flowers so dear;
Yet at their roots they still the harvest hold,
And the rare sweetness of the vernal year.

Oh, dreary earth that now imprisoned lies;
Oh, bleak, dense clouds which frost and tempest bring:
Upon this darkness quickening suns shall rise,
Out of this sleep a new creation spring!

. . . . . .

I turn mine eyes from all that is without
To that which is unseen and close within:
Is 't Winter there, with storms of fear and doubt?
Lies my heart cold and barren in its sin?

I make not answer save to Him alone
Who the seed planted that can never die:
If now, O Lord, it lifeless seem as stone,
Inert, unquickened, 'neath a sunless sky, —

Thou wilt unloose the bonds that hold it fast,
Thou wilt to slumbering pulses quickening bring,
And out of deadness and the stormy blast
Unfold the life and beauty of the Spring!

SEWARD.

I.

WELL, be it so! The not uncommon fate
Of greatness overtakes thee in thy prime:
He who is mighty will have foes who hate;
Thou hast false friends, who do but consummate
Their own destruction in attempting thine.
O peerless champion of the cause so just,
When some, o'er-zealous now, were cold or mute,
Thou with sublimest courage took the trust
And priceless venture, conscious that thou must
Bear scorn of those who would thy cause dispute.
Keep heart! the great hereafter will refute
Each slander born of envy or of hate,
And thus thy final labors will compute:
He Freedom saved, by saving first the State.

February, 1862.

II.

EIGHT years of service, such as greatest kings
Might seek, yet be unable to perform:
Thou hast rode out from first to last the storm
That shook the nation. Now the day that brings
To all the land the crowning act of peace
Takes off thy burden, gives thee glad release.
How through these years in silence hast thou borne
The cruel doubt, the slanders of debate, —
The assassin's knife, and keener blade of scorn
Wielded by party in its narrow hate;
How couldst thou pause each step to vindicate
Of thy surpassing work? Lo! it is done:
Freedom enshrined in our regenerate State,
And they who were divided made as one!

March 4, 1869.

AN AUTUMN REVERIE.

I.

In field and wood the purple aster 's blooming,
Where nodding plumes of golden-rod are seen;
And wayside ferns, their autumn dress assuming,
Have put aside their summer robes of green.

Cool are the clouds above the regal mountains,
Though tree and bush with color are aglow,
And sluggish brooks, changed into tumbling fountains,
O'er rock and root in rapid currents flow.

From tree to tree the thrifty squirrel 's leaping,
Hunting the walnut and the winter store;

While through the fields, amid the stubble reaping,
A myriad host of roaming insects pour.

On shaded walks the colored leaf is falling,
The pasture-lands are turning brown and sere,
And from the sky the chattering crow is calling,
And not a bird of summer singeth here.

The summer days have come and have departed,
The flush of health is changing to decay;
And Earth takes back the life that it imparted,
To hold it for her resurrection day.

II.

What if gray clouds now take the place of golden,
What if all Nature suffereth a change,
Still beauty fills the eyes that are not holden,
Where'er they lift, wherever they may range.

To clearer heights the hills their peaks are lifting,
The valleys open to a broader reach;
And changing lights and shades are o'er them drifting,
Weaving the gold or purple robe of each.

The wind from out the azure west is stealing,
The cool pure sky is wondrous deep and fair,
And rhythmic movements of poetic feeling
Suffuse the soul in a delicious air.

The misty heats have left the upper spaces,
The missing stars brought back their glittering fires;
Night unto night, from out the heavenly places,
Prolongs the gladness which the day inspires.

These are the days and nights of peaceful pleasure, —
The rarest, not the saddest of the year;
And though their music beats a minor measure,
No sweeter strains can fill a listening ear.

III.

And Nature dying touches still the living, —
The benediction of her closing days;
And fuller life and quickened hope is giving
To hands that labor and to lips that praise.

If the seed die not, how shall it be raisèd?
Out of this death a future life shall spring:
Once more, O Lord, Thy holy name be praisèd,
For the great truth these hours of autumn bring.

I take the lesson from the fading beauty,
The hope of life now promised in decay,
And cheerful turn to meet the waiting duty
With added strength and courage for the way.

No more the lotos lures me into dreaming,
No more I idly on these hills recline;
Afar the city's beckoning lights are gleaming,
And days of rest can be no longer mine.

As on my hearth the embers fast are dying —
The leaping flame went out an hour ago —
And in the pines the rising winds are sighing,
A crowning blessing, Lord, on me bestow!

CHARLES HODGE.

A PRINCE, wise, valiant, just, and yet benign;
His own will free, and still by law controlled:
No king, with armaments and fleets untold,
Such mastery had, with purpose so divine,
O'er unseen forces, active and malign.
He fought the invisible spirits of the air,
Not for himself alone but for his race;
And men grew wiser, better, unaware
That he in silence by his faith and prayer
Saved their beleaguered souls. Spirit of Grace,
Who in him wrought, and held him in the strife,
We give Thee thanks that Thou didst him ordain
Unto a work wherein no act is vain,
And death but larger makes the service and the life.

THE WANING YEARS.

Ah, swiftly fly my fast-recurring years,
  Lessening the limits of their final bound;
Measured by time, how long the way appears,
  How few the days until the end is found!

And yet I fear not, though the time be brief,
  Nor pray my days or years less swiftly go;
Nor ask that I life's common cares and grief
  Henceforth, until the end, may rarely know:

Nay, rather, for a heart that grows not old,
  A soul that time and sense shall cease to bind;
That, day by day, until my years are told,
  I more of good in all this life may find.

A larger love, a broader ground of hope,
  More faith in God, more confidence in man;
Unmoved by fear, though I in darkness grope,
  As knowing this is God's perfecting plan.

Thou, Lord, hast kept me from that sad estate
That falls too oft on man's declining days;
Nor change, nor loss, disturbing doubts create,
To dim my hopes, and still the voice of praise.

Preserved by Thee from baleful dreams and fears,
Grant still more love, more hope for human kind;
The world grows better e'en in strifes and tears, —
We but deny it when our eyes are blind.

Not now for dying grace I cry to Thee, —
Nay, grace to live, — the strength to live aright;
In all I am, in all I seek to be,
To walk by faith, and not by weakening sight.

CONSIDER HIM.

I.

That Holy One,
Who came to earth for thee;
Oh, strangest thing beneath the sun,
That He by any mortal one
Forgotten e'er should be!

II.

The Son of God,
Who pity had on thee;
Who turned aside the smiting rod,
And all alone the garden trod,
Forgotten shall He be?

III.

The Blessed Lord,
Who came to die for thee;
Whom Jew and Gentile then abhorred,
While heavenly hosts His name adored,
Forgotten can He be?

IV.

That Brother, Friend,
Who daily waits on thee;
Who every want doth comprehend
With love divine that has no end,
Forgotten can he be?

V.

Oh, Patient One,
Thou speakest thus to me:
Oh, strangest thing beneath the sun,
That thou, for whom so much is done,
Shouldst oft forgetful be!

VI.

My Lord, I know
What truth Thou say'st to me:
Forgive my sin, on me bestow
Such grace as hence to all will show
I do consider Thee!

COMMON TASKS.

WHEN shall I learn the Master to obey? —
That service lies along the daily road,
Wherein the soul may hold its upward way
Through all the hours on wonted cares bestowed.
Forget not now, my heart,
Those many days when, as the Son of Man,
His blameless life on common tasks was spent,
Nor from the world apart,
And held within the all-embracing plan,
While He about His Father's business went.

By Joseph's side He uncomplaining wrought,
As other laborer might for laborer's wage;
He, Son of God, no loftier service sought
Than such as may the lowliest one engage.
Rejoice, O heart of mine!
Break out in song! — there is no menial task,
No work but promise has of large reward,
With peace and hope divine;
Nor once forget, in all ye do or ask,
The servant is not greater than his Lord!

BIRTHDAY VERSES.

Not now along the distant eastern shore
The cool, deep shadows sweep athwart the dew;
Not now the sun mounts upward, as of yore,
Into a heaven of blue.

My sun has crossed the high meridian line,
Beyond the clouds that thither come and go;
While on the western slopes with day's decline
The shadows deeper grow.

I face the opening portals of the west,
My eyes with radiant visions slowly fill,
While lie the clouds in level bars at rest,
And all the winds are still.

I turn not hence with longings for the morn,
Nor grieve I for the passing of the noon;
Enough that every change to me hath borne
God's blessing late or soon.

Nor pray I that the now descending sun
Hasten his going, that my day be o'er;
I am content — content God's will be done,
Be my time less or more.

Nay, something deeper, better than content,
Or dumb submission to the will divine;
Thanks rather for the life I here have spent,
The hopes forever mine,

The endless gifts, the mercies manifold,
With all that has been and is still to be:
My God, my heart were passionless and cold,
Did I not bring to Thee

The measure of its depths and overflow;
Did not a joyful song to Thee ascend,
For all that I have known, am yet to know,
Until my day shall end,

Of that full love which all my way enfolds,
Still keeps me close within its sovereign care,
And grants whate'er I need, and yet withholds
That which I could not bear.

I KNOW.

At yonder turn in tangled woods,
The mountain brook is lost to me;
And yet I know it still flows on
And downward to the sea.

From out the nest the robin sweeps,
With song, into the wastes of air;
And yet I know he will return,
For still his nest is there.

The thoughts I have of one I love
Go hence, and so are lost to me;
And yet I know they pass to him
Who dwells beyond the sea.

How wind the waters to the sea,
How finds the bird again its nest,
Or thought o'erleaps the continents
Upon love's high behest, —

I cannot see, I cannot tell,
And yet no doubt is mine:
Is not belief as strong as sight,
And faith more sure than sign?

J. L.

As some deep spring on a sequestered height
Rolls limpid out, and broadens as it flows,
And generous gifts increasingly bestows,
Hiding itself beyond the common sight
E'en while it blesses, or imparts delight;
So he, our Blameless Prince, on earth no more,
Sent out his benefactions far and wide:
His silent gifts, repeated o'er and o'er,
Became a flowing, an abundant tide.
O city of his birth and noble pride,
How well he loved thee let his deeds attest:
A shadow fell upon thee when he died,
And heart to heart instinctively confessed
That God had taken from us of His best.

"THE NIGHT SWEPT COOL O'ER BETHLEHEM'S PLAIN."

THE night swept cool o'er Bethlehem's plain,
And folded close the distant hill;
Alone the weary shepherds watched,
While all their drowsy flocks were still;
Above, the silent stars moved on
Each in its own majestic way:
Who dreamed the Son of Man had come,
And in a Bethlehem manger lay?

No wondrous sign had filled the sky,
When sank the flaming sun afar;
No ominous cloud with darkness came,
To pale or hide the Eastern star;
No tumult filled the town or inn,
Where travellers tarried on their way
Unconscious that the Son of God
So near them in a manger lay.

Along the surging streets of Rome,
Through all the Empire of the West,
Nor sign nor sound the hour made known,
In which all nations should be blest:

That night imperial Cæsar slept
On regal couch his cares away,
And dreamed not that the King of kings
At Bethlehem in a manger lay.

Only where simple shepherds watched,
In fields which Ruth of old did glean,
Was the rapt song of angels heard,
The sudden mystic glory seen;
And when the heavenly song had ceased,
The heavenly light had passed away,
The shepherds entered Bethlehem,
And found the place where Jesus lay.

No marvel that they spread abroad
The saying that to them was told —
"Lo, He has come!" — the Christ of God,
The Saviour promised them of old;
No marvel that with prayer and praise
Back to their flocks they took their way:
The Shepherd of their souls had come, —
At Bethlehem in a manger lay!

"I MOURN NOT NOW THE DYING YEAR."

I MOURN not now the dying year,
I call not back the vanished past;
No vain regrets shall vex me here,
Nor doubts perplex to hold me fast.
Enough that from myself I turn,
Still conscious of my sin and wrong, —
That thoughts of love within me burn,
And move my heart to song.

O Love divine, Love manifest,
In the vast world that round me lies;
That, knowing what for each is best,
In wisdom grants, or else denies;
O'er sun and stars, o'er land and sea,
Rules undisturbed with ceaseless care,
Yet condescends to compass me,
And with my weakness bear.

The hurrying years may come and go,
My heart with joy or sorrow fill;
Yet evermore 't is mine to know
That I am close environed still;

Forgotten not, though I forget;
Still guarded, though I wayward be; —
Dear Lord, this is Thy love, and yet
How poor is mine for Thee!

No king whom armies close surround
Sits on his throne as firm and sure;
No State with power and blessings crowned
Can hold its subjects so secure.
Oh, sweet persuasion, that to-night
Assures what is, and is to be, —
That life, nor death, nor depth, nor height,
Can take my Lord from me.

Oh, rest of Faith, — the gift of Love, —
That dies not with the dying years;
How brighten now the heavens above,
How fair this lower world appears!
No marvel that from self I turn,
Though conscious of my sin and wrong;
That thoughts of love within me burn,
And move my heart to song.

UNDECIDED.

I AM so weary, Lord,
  Weary and cold;
Strong are the winds and keen
  Without the fold:
I in the darkness hear
  Thy voice of old;
And yet I wait, I wait,
  And cold, so cold.

What aileth me, dear Lord,
  That thus I wait?
I see the sheltering walls,
  The open gate,
And loving arms outspread
  Me to enfold;
And yet I linger, Lord,
  So cold, so cold.

How long, dear Lord, how long?
  I falter still:
My weak, my faithless heart
  Unnerves my will.

I would not, and I would
  Enter the fold;
And yet I stand without,
  So cold, so cold.

Wilt Thou forget me, Lord?
  Thy help withhold?
I die if Thou come not
  E'en by the fold:
Come with Thy quickening strength,
  Come as of old!
I am so weary, Lord,
  And cold, so cold.

SEA-FOG.

THE sun went down behind the clouds
That hugged the round horizon's rim;
And soon we saw the fitful stars
In drifting waves of vapor swim.
As o'er the unresisting sea
The good ship held her onward way,
Some said, "Thank God that such a night
Has crowned what was a perfect day."

And one by one we went below
To take our rest in quiet sleep;
We knew the watch we left above
Would faithful guard and vigil keep:
We slept to wake far in the night
A dull disturbing sound to hear, —
The oft repeated whistle-blow
That brings unrest and boding fear.

We felt the engine's constant throb,
We heard the screw in ceaseless play,
Yet knew not where, or near or far,
Some sudden, hidden danger lay;

And still our forward course we held
  While still the warning signal blew:
Ah! steadfast hands were on the wheel,
  And well his way the captain knew.

The morning broke, and still the fog
  In drifting folds o'erhung our sight;
While each said, "Would that lifting winds
  Might bring to us a broadening light!"
At last the misty veil was drawn,
  The clear expanse around us lay,
And timid ones took heart again,
  When once they saw an open way.

So falls unrest upon the heart
  When sudden clouds obscure our skies,
And God seems hidden in the doubts
  From out of which our fears arise;
Yet ever on life's changing sea,
  Though mists arise or tempest blows,
A guiding Hand is on the wheel,
  And all the way our Captain knows.

IN ABSENCE.

DEAR one, between us lies the vexing sea,
And weary leagues of mountain and of plain:
Though o'er the lengthening space I mastery gain
To backward send my constant thought of thee,
Would that thy voice might answer make to me,
As here I see the happy lovers go
Through fragrant meadows to their calm retreats,
While the old tale they tell, which well I know,
My voice instinctive unto thee repeats.
And yet, belovèd, though we dwell apart,
Our voices hushed e'en to the listening ear,
How oft they mingle in yon upper sphere,
Asking for each — heart answering unto heart —
God's greater love, and knowing He will hear!

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